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General Assembly
Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

13th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 17 September 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Annadif (Chad), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Address by Mr. Festus Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Botswana.

Mr. Festus Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Festus Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mogae: Let me begin by stating that our thoughts and prayers are with the people of the United States as they commemorate the first anniversary of the 11 September 2001 terror attacks in New York and Washington. The events of that day compel us to unite and adopt effective measures to eradicate the scourge of terrorism.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm Botswana's strong support for the work of the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee established to monitor the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). The international community must maintain its unity and remain vigilant so as to ensure that such acts of terror never happen again.

It is my pleasure to extend to you, Sir, and to your country, Chad, the warm congratulations of Botswana on your election to a vice-presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, and to wish you every success. I assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation.

If we had started this meeting on time, I would not have minded at all. I have greater respect for time than for hordes of latecomers. I am also grateful for the fact that after other heads of State or Government left New York, nobody removed the chairs in the Assembly Hall.

I wish to pay tribute to Mr. Han Seung-Soo of the Republic of Korea, President of the General Assembly at the fifty-seventh session, for the skilful manner in which he conducted the work of that session.

Let me also place on record that we appreciate the good work which our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, is doing to reform the United Nations funds and programmes. The reform process is contributing to the strengthening of the capacity of those special institutions to deliver assistance to Member States in a more coherent and efficient manner.

I join others in congratulating and welcoming into the United Nations family Switzerland, a new Member State, and East Timor, which is soon to become one.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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I am delighted that Switzerland has now taken its rightful place in this world body. The United Nations has indeed been strengthened, and its universal character has undoubtedly been enhanced.

In East Timor the United Nations demonstrated its commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter by playing a pivotal and decisive role in ensuring that the people of East Timor can, at long last, exercise their right to national self-determination.

We live in a world of diverse cultures and traditions, yet we are united by our common humanity. There is no alternative to coming together to address the many dangers that threaten humanity. No one country can hope to successfully confront, on its own, those global challenges — whether underdevelopment, poverty, insecurity or threats to peace. They are challenges that require global solutions and the participation of all global stakeholders to confront them. It is for those reasons that the United Nations remains an important unifying institution for all of humanity. It is the only institution that can play the important role of fostering partnership, cooperation and multilateralism.

States — especially those, like ours, that our small — have high expectations of what multilateral cooperation can do for them, and how it can change for the better the lives and destiny of the peoples of the United Nations.

In this regard, we cannot fail to speak about the varied and complex challenges developing countries continue to face, particularly in the continent of Africa. Despite consistent efforts in the past to assist Africa, there are still widening disparities in development between the continent and the rest of the world. Africa continues to experience high levels of poverty, which is aggravated by, among other things, the unfavourable global economic environment and conflicts. These challenges are further compounded by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Let me hasten to state that to acknowledge the existence of problems does not mean that the future is entirely bleak. There are positive developments that give reason for hope for the realization of the aspirations of our people. Africa has committed itself to creating an environment conducive to economic growth and development. We have taken concrete steps to ensure that Africa is united and better prepared to face up to its problems.

We have taken the first step in a broad and comprehensive process to bring our countries together through the establishment of the African Union. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which was considered by this Assembly this week, is one of the major initiatives of the African Union. Botswana is convinced that NEPAD provides a sound basis for building real partnerships within the continent, as well as with the rest of the international community.

It is important to reiterate Africa's deep appreciation of the support and assistance that we have received and continue to receive from the international community. We particularly welcome the resolution that has just been adopted by the General Assembly mandating the United Nations funds and programmes to support the implementation of NEPAD. Botswana is also happy with the decision of the G8 countries to join hands with us to ensure the success of this initiative. We stand ready to make our contribution so that the noble objectives of NEPAD can be attained.

Central to the achievement of Africa's development objectives is a commitment by the international community to implement the decisions of the United Nations world conferences. We need to work assiduously to implement the Monterrey Consensus, which identifies sources that can be used to finance the development goals that we have set for ourselves. Potential sources include the mobilization of domestic resources; the mobilization of external resources, including foreign direct investment; increased financial and technical cooperation; and the resolution of the debt crisis. The Monterrey Consensus also recognizes trade as an engine of growth and development. The international community therefore has a responsibility to ensure that developing countries can participate in world trade. In this regard, we view partnership agreements, such as the Cotonou Agreement and the African Growth and Opportunity Act, as important steps towards fulfilling some of the objectives of the Monterrey Consensus.

HIV/AIDS remains, undoubtedly, the most serious threat to the economic and social progress of the world. Its devastating impact on the African continent is well documented. There is no doubt that no one country has the capacity to deal with the problems associated with this epidemic on its own. If we are to conquer it, we will need a strategy that combines efforts on a broad front. Those who think that they are

still free from the epidemic and that it is an African problem had better wake up, because next time it will be on their own doorstep.

Botswana is immensely grateful for the support it has received from the United Nations and other cooperating partners in its efforts to fight the epidemic. I also wish to commend the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts in mobilizing the international community to support our efforts. I am sure that, with the help of the international community, we in Africa will still be standing when the dust settles.

Botswana is pleased to note the commendable efforts that the United Nations continues to make in the maintenance of peace and security in various parts of the world. With the continued assistance of the United Nations and the rest of the international community, we have reason to be optimistic and hope that the continent of Africa will soon find peace.

We have closely followed the Organization's initiative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in the areas of the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of the former combatants into civil society. We welcome the ongoing consultations between the various parties to the conflict. We are anxious, however, to see full-fledged negotiations that can lead to a lasting political settlement. The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo yearn for peace and national reconciliation, as well as the social and economic development of their country.

We therefore call upon all parties to demonstrate greater determination and a sense of urgency in the search for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in that country. Peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is possible and necessary, but in the final analysis, it depends on the political will of the signatories to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement.

I wish to salute the efforts and indomitable spirit of my immediate predecessor, Sir Ketumile Masire. He has been tireless and unwavering in his mission of facilitating the inter-Congolese dialogue, convincing the people of that country that peace can come only if they are willing to talk to each other. Nobody will come from heaven or hell to create peace for them. I also wish to place on record Botswana's appreciation of the efforts and determination of President Mbeki of South Africa. He has invested substantial time, energy and resources to find solutions to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Botswana welcomes and commends the historic step taken by the Government of Angola and UNITA in signing the Memorandum of Understanding of 4 April 2002 as an addendum to the Lusaka Protocol. The people of Angola have opted for peace. They expect the international community to help them consolidate this peace. Let us not fail them. I ask the ambassadors and foreign ministers who happen to be present here to take the message to my fellow heads of State in Africa that we should not let down the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, above all, the people of Angola. They have suffered enough.

Conflicts and instability in other parts of the world, such as the Middle East and Afghanistan, are of serious concern to us. We look to the international community, within the framework of the United Nations, to play a greater role in the peaceful resolution of those conflicts.

Let me conclude by reiterating Botswana's continued support for the United Nations and express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General, whose visionary leadership has continued to guide our Organization.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Botswana for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Festus Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by The Honourable Sir Allan Kemakeza, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands

The Acting President (spoke in French): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Sir Allan Kemakeza, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands.

The Honourable Sir Allan Kemakeza, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, was escorted to the rostrum.

Sir Allan Kemakeza (Solomon Islands): On behalf of the Government and people of Solomon Islands, I wish to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the fifty-seventh session

of the General Assembly. I am confident that, under his experience and skilful leadership, we will reach positive results for this Organization and for all peoples of the world.

I also thank His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-Soo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, for his distinguished service in presiding over the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

In the same manner, I thank His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General, for his good and untiring efforts and his dedication aimed at realizing the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

Like others who have spoken before me, I also wish to congratulate East Timor, our close Pacific neighbour that is soon to be a member of the United Nations, and Switzerland as a new member of the United Nations. Solomon Islands looks forward to developing further relationships with those two countries through bilateral and multilateral means.

As we journey into this new millennium, challenges facing the international community are more daunting. Human ingenuity and technological advances complicate those challenges. Acts of terrorism and armed conflicts proliferate in many parts of the world. Prospects for progressive economic and social services and security, and improved living standards for the vast majority of the world's population have become mere unrealized dreams.

Nonetheless, as an international instrument for the promotion and the betterment of human life, the United Nations has considerable ability and experience in pursuing what is best for the common good of all peoples around the world, including guaranteeing world peace and security through the Security Council.

Today I reaffirm the commitment of Solomon Islands to the principles of the Charter. I also wish to place on record the appreciation of Solomon Islands for the worthy assistance from other United Nations organs and agencies, including the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Commission on Human Rights.

Solomon Islands also upholds its faith in the Security Council and acknowledge its important role in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. At the same time, we recognize the changing scene in the international political and security environment. Those changes must be reflected in our Organization as well. The reform of the Security Council must continue, including a review on the relevance of the provisions of veto power accorded to permanent members. Moreover, Solomon Islands supports the expansion of the permanent membership of the Council to include Japan and Germany. Those two countries have so much influence in the global political and economic arena and therefore they are better placed to contribute constructively and positively to world peace and security.

For a small island nation like Solomon Islands, the United Nations is the foremost institution to turn to in time of trouble and need. My predecessor stated that from this rostrum last year. At that time, he elaborated on the circumstances of the conflict that had erupted in Solomon Islands between November 1998 and October 2000.

Today, we are still struggling with the outcome of that devastating conflict. We have lost much. We have to do much more to reconstruct the destroyed fabric of our country. That is the course my Government has charted, in order to maintain our sovereignty with dignity and to show integrity and respect as a Member of the United Nations family.

The mandate to lead the country was clearly given to me through the democratic process when Solomon Islands held its post-conflict general election on 5 December 2001. The polls returned a new Parliament of 50 duly elected members, charged with a clear working majority of 29 out of the 50 members. The national coalition Government for peace, unity and reconstruction assumed office and undertook the challenging task of rebuilding Solomon Islands.

The foremost strategy that my Government has adopted is to pursue four policy areas: first, the restoration of peace and security; secondly, education; thirdly, health and medial services; and, fourthly, productive sectors.

We began this important work during the first 100 days of entering into office. We have since consolidated our efforts, notwithstanding practical difficulties that emanate from the lack of financial and the absence of other relevant resources.

Our second strategy is the formulation of a national economic recovery plan. That plan focuses on strengthening agriculture, fisheries, forestry, mining, manufacturing, tourism and infrastructure development sectors. Besides giving closer attention to the promotion of health and education services, the plan also addresses population growth and ensures promotion of responsible environmental management.

I am happy to state that, at present, we are also working on a sustainable development plan for our country. An integrated financial package for this strategy has been submitted to our development partners. Thus far, the responses received, while encouraging, still raise questions that require serious and genuine consideration in view of our present circumstances. It is here that we sincerely look to the United Nations for assistance in facilitating closer consultation and constructive engagement with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank.

The huge amount of debt that burdens poor countries is real, and it continues to afflict most third-world countries, including small States such as Solomon Islands. This is a real challenge that my people and country face as we make our best efforts and endeavours to rebuild our nation and maintain our independence and sovereignty with dignity, integrity and respect during these difficult times and in the future. On this important point, the United Nations should consider supporting debt forgiveness for countries that are debt-strapped. Solomon Islands can be included in this category.

A few days ago, the people of the City of New York, the United States of America and the rest of the world paid moving tributes to the thousands of innocent lives tragically lost through the cowardly and senseless acts of terrorism committed on 11 September 2001. The heroic men and women who perished at that sad time now deserve a special place in our hearts and in the annals of history.

My Government is taking steps to accede to a number of international conventions relating to counter-terrorist activities. We have communicated these important measures to the United Nations. We seek the assistance of the United Nations and members of the international community to enhance our efforts.

The increase in armed conflicts and the illegal trade of small arms are directly linked. Armed conflicts have increased in most parts of the world. They are fuelled mainly by the availability of the illegal manufacture, official sale or supply of small arms, and this has resulted in the loss of innocent life. Over the past 50 years, small weapons and landmines have killed more people than weapons of mass destruction.

Small arms have also found their way into Solomon Islands, and they have been used in the three-year conflict which has adversely affected my country's sociocultural cohesiveness and good governance. In no uncertain manner, this has crippled the economy. The continuing presence of small arms in communities has posed a major threat to the peace, security and stability of my nation. Any hope of economic recovery is constantly threatened by lawlessness. Notwithstanding this, the Government remains committed, within its limited resources, to retrieving arms and restoring confidence to our people in the communities. However, we believe that the international community, through the United Nations, has a pivotal role to play in assisting the country to rid itself of armed threats by taking more ambitious action to curb the arms culture that is taking root in our country.

Peace of mind and safety from danger are not achieved by the mere absence of war. Rather, they are the product of a nation's ability to achieve sustainable economic prosperity, better education, and health and social services for all its people. Peace and security for every human soul comes down simply to meeting the most basic needs.

Even with the successful outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which included promises of economic growth and protection of our environment, Solomon Islands remains sceptical about the practical outcome of action plans for developing and least developed countries. We have committed ourselves to similar action plans for sustainable development in the past. Agenda 21 of 1992 and the Barbados Programme of Action for small island developing States, among others, are valid policy blueprints for sustainable development. Unfortunately, we have not lived up to our commitments. We all have failed. That is why world leaders again assembled, in South Africa, to take stock of our failures and make new commitments. And indeed, new commitments have been made. Now is the time to test the commitments made in South Africa.

As The Honourable Laisenia Qarase, Prime Minister of Fiji and Chairman of the Pacific Islands Forum, aptly said in his address at the World Summit, let us turn our words into deeds. Solomon Islands can only hope that, this time around, there is a will to lead us eventually to the goals and objectives set at the World Summit in South Africa.

Solomon Islands is very much aware of its vulnerability to natural and man-induced disasters. Like other small island developing countries, we continue to seek of the international community not only to recognize the uniqueness of our vulnerability but also to take concerted action towards achieving many of our goals and objectives for sustainable development, collectively as a group and individually as nations.

The communiqué issued by the recent Pacific Islands Forum summit held last August in Suva, Fiji, reflects the political, economic, security and environmental issues that are important to the region. These need our collective resolve, as well as the attention and cooperation of the wider international community.

The adverse impact of sea-level rise is a threat to the economies and survival of small and low-lying island countries, in particular in the Pacific, the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean. Scientific research and reports, including the Third Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, issued in 2001, have given us all the more reason to be deeply concerned. Solomon Islands joins other small island States in calling again on the countries that have yet to become parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol to do so, and seriously to commit to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.

The least developed countries still grapple with the harsh realities of poverty, vulnerability to external economic shocks, debt burden, poor infrastructure, and poor or limited access to better education, health, social services — and the list goes on. Even with an increasing commitment to globalization, the situation of many least developed countries and nation-States has neither improved nor stabilized. In many instances, conditions have worsened.

Solomon Islands believes that the renewed commitment through the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, is a timely action by all international organizations to refocus attention and global resources on the neediest and poorest countries. We support the immediate implementation of the Programme and note with satisfaction the progress that has been made so far.

Solomon Islands once again calls upon the United Nations to respect the expressed wish of the Government and the people of the Republic of China to be readmitted as a full and equal member of this Organization. The world has marvelled at Taiwan's economic transformation. Within a short span of time, it has not only established a stable and vibrant domestic economy, but also has become one of the world's most influential economies in terms of international trade, investment outflows and information technology. Taiwan is a sovereign country in full control of its own affairs and with influence in the world economy, and it is unjust to deny its people the right to stand tall and be counted among the many nations represented in international institutions.

Taiwan is a willing and able country, ready to shoulder the obligations of the United Nations and other international organizations. Taiwan has proved itself through its international economic cooperation with many developing and least developed countries. Solomon Islands is convinced that that there are no legal barriers to Taiwan's membership in the United Nations, only political obstacles. Let us therefore cast aside those political obstacles and take a positive approach by according the Government and the people of the Republic of China the membership they deserve and the opportunity to fully participate in the affairs of the United Nations under its Charter.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Allan Kemakeza, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Serene Highness Crown Prince Albert, Crown Prince of the Principality of Monaco

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Crown Prince of the Principality of Monaco.

Crown Prince Albert, Crown Prince of the Principality of Monaco, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Serene Highness Crown Prince Albert, Crown Prince of the Principality of Monaco, and I invite him to address the General Assembly.

Crown Prince Albert (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): First of all I wish to thank the President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo, for the masterful way in which he accomplished his work. I would also like to thank the members of his Bureau. Significant progress was made during the session we recently finished. One item in particular concerns us as it involves the conduct and revitalization of our proceedings.

Secondly, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the decision of the Secretary-General to appoint, as of 12 September 2002, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello to succeed Her Excellency Mrs. Mary Robinson as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. My Government has always appreciated Mrs. Robinson's wholehearted commitment and knows it can count on Mr. Vieira de Mello, who has many times shown his competence and his dedication to the Organization, to show just as much commitment in promoting and protecting human rights.

I am very pleased at the outset of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly to congratulate Mr. Jan Kavan on his election to the presidency both on my own account and on behalf of the highest authorities of my country, as well as to congratulate all the members of the Bureau. I pledge the full support and cooperation of the delegation of Monaco to help them complete their important work.

One year ago, an attack, as vile as it was cowardly, struck the United States of America. That day its instigators and perpetrators placed themselves not only outside of the law, but outside humanity, outside of the universal fundamental values and principles that inspire our nations and guide the ethical, political, economic and social progress of States. That wanton act provoked an unprecedented reaction from the international community. It unanimously gave the members of the Security Council and the General Assembly sophisticated means to fight terrorism in all its forms, including by cutting off its financial resources.

The Principality of Monaco participated in this fight with determination in response to requests by the Security Council and its Counter-Terrorism Committee. In broadening information exchange with other States, both bilaterally and multilaterally, we established or strengthened monitoring and surveillance measures which were necessary in the of legislative, regulatory, and judicial spheres.

On 10 November 2001 I personally signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, which entered into force in Monaco on 8 April 2002, and our Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on instructions from my father, the Sovereign Prince, signed on 24 June 2002 Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The Principality of Monaco, in fact, is or will be a party to all major universal and regional instruments designed to strengthen cooperation among nations to fight against terrorism. This has greatly enhanced our cooperation with other States.

In that regard I must make reference to a law which was adopted unanimously last June by our National Council, the parliament of Monaco, and which entered into force on 8 August 2002. This law amends, strengthens and supplements the existing law on the involvement of financial entities in the fight against money-laundering and financing terrorism. The text takes into account Monaco's undertakings as a United Nations Member State as well as measures anticipated by competent bodies such as the Financial Action Task Force.

Also on 8 August 2002, the authorities of my country were happy to have implemented the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime, even though the Principality of Monaco, while fervently hoping to be so, is not yet a member of that noble European institution. I also wish to note the speed and relevance of my country's response, especially since

our country is sometimes subjected to unjustified and incorrect criticism in this area.

While terrorist threats persist and while civilian populations continue, unfortunately, to be subjected to the yoke of terror, the origin and form of this plague seem now to be better understood and under greater control. Measures, both national and international, have been implemented with the help of the Security Council and its Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and seem to be yielding encouraging results. The strengthening and broadening of the mandate of the Terrorism Prevention Branch, as the Secretary-General has proposed in the report requested by our Assembly, seems to meet all of the conditions we need to upgrade the fight against terrorism, not only by allowing us to bolster cooperation among United Nations Member States, but also by providing enhanced technical assistance to countries that ask for it.

Thanks to a prompt and effective international reaction, Afghanistan, for too long a home to terrorists, has regained its freedom. Its new provisional Government, which emerged from the traditional assembly, the Loya Jerga, last June, has endeavoured, particularly with the help of our Organization, to rebuild the country and to establish a democratic political regime. We wish it full success.

Another area of satisfaction on the part of the international community is the nuclear disarmament agreement that was adopted last May by the two great Powers, the United States of America and the Russian Federation. Other events in the world are also hopeful. The Republic of Sierra Leone and the Republic of Angola are taking steps towards recovery in a peaceful and democratic spirit. Encouraging signs of hope are seen everywhere. In Africa, we again fervently hope for the success of the peace initiatives in Burundi and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). A calming of the situation in the Sudan is also of great interest to us.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU), which became the African Union last July, has played an invaluable role in reinforcing harmony between African peoples. We are following this undertaking with intense interest, as it took on a new dimension this year. We take this opportunity to address to His Excellency, Mr. Amara Essy, Interim Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, our sincere congratulations and encouragements.

In Latin America, we see with hope that some countries, whose economic and financial conditions were once in bad shape, are in the process of recovery, thanks in particular to the help of international financial institutions.

In Asia, finally, the prudence shown by the leaders of India and Pakistan over the border disputes has led to the reduction of tension in Kashmir. We are sincerely grateful for this. This is an excellent step, similarly to the one taken by Sri Lanka, which has renewed the dialogue with the Tamil separatists so as to put an end to too much suffering.

Another source of satisfaction is Timor-Leste, which with the effective and valuable help of our Organization was able to successfully achieve independence and acquire political and financial structures that are crucial to its development. We are therefore happy to welcome very soon, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to the United Nations. We are also quite happy to welcome the admission of the Swiss Confederation as a Member State.

Switzerland has always been, particularly since the creation of the League of Nations in Geneva, a steadfast participant in the international promotion of peace, human rights and humanitarian protection. Our congratulations and wishes for success and prosperity are formulated to those two States, to their leaders and to their people.

The United Nations needs them more than ever now, and also needs all the good will and talent possible to meet the high ambitions that we set for ourselves when the Organization was created, ambitions renewed firmly and solemnly at the Millennium Summit, as well as during the large international meetings that followed.

My country is committed to implementing the action plans adopted during those exceptional meetings. Our special session on children and the second World Assembly on Ageing have tangibly changed the perception that the international community had of children and seniors. Both must become actors who are more integrated and active within our societies.

While deciding to increase its voluntary contributions to the large programmes of the United Nations aimed at development and the protection of the environment, the Government of Monaco has at the

same time decided to concentrate its efforts on specific areas and specific regions. The Mediterranean region is an example of our fight against marine pollution that aims to save regional flora and fauna. My Government, whether through its Office for International Cooperation for Development and the Environment, or through non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which are numerous and active in Monaco, is encouraging the implementation of specific projects, projects that are essentially ecological in nature, depending often on the availability of micro-credits.

As regards the Mediterranean Sea, next 10 December we will be celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It was indeed on 10 December 1982 that that text was open for ratification by States at Montego Bay in Jamaica. It was the result of almost 15 years of negotiations, which we will solemnly celebrate on this coming occasion.

There are particularly difficult times, such as the present moment, when the status quo is not good enough, times when we must show determination in order to bring innovative ideas to meet the fundamental changes going on throughout the world. The Secretary-General, whose dynamic nature and wisdom we appreciate, mentions this in his report on the follow-up to the major conferences organized by the United Nations at different summits, including the Millennium Summit. The report is important and timely.

The substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in July also confirmed the need for such steps. The Ministerial Declaration, adopted on that occasion, focuses usefully on the importance of developing human resources, protecting health, and providing education, particularly for young girls, and focuses on their contributions to development.

I would like to commend the President and the Bureau of the Council. His Excellency Mr. Ivan Simonović, its President and the Permanent Representative of Croatia, and the other Members of the Bureau have all toiled with competence and great skill in order to guarantee the success of the Council's work.

During the high-level debates, some trends emerged that our Government believes are essential. For example, there is the choice of a governance that allows us to establish true partnerships that depend mostly on the human resources of developing countries themselves, as well as on businesses and civil society.

Yesterday's high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly produced solemn and excellent results and enabled us to gain a better understanding of the character and the imperatives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which undoubtedly offers real prospects for mobilizing resources for Africa and integrating it into the world economy. The establishment by the Economic and Social Council of an ad hoc advisory group for African countries emerging from conflict is a step that we are also following. Without political stability, there can be no guaranteed sustainable development.

The concept of a "culture of protection" advanced by the Secretary-General, with regard to special economic assistance, humanitarian aid, and help in natural disasters, provides the advantage of associating in a single thrust preventive action and priority assistance to the communities affected. We appreciate the principle and the scope of this activity.

In the aftermath of conflicts and crises, the link between humanitarian action and long-term developments is crucial for the success of any national reconstruction programme. Public meetings of the Security Council dedicated to such matters provide an opportunity to emphasize, with the necessary impact, the importance of such measures.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which has just finished in Johannesburg and in which I participated, reminded us of the essential concerns for the future. The Monterrey consensus was confirmed, stressing the fact that there can now be no stable and balanced development without serious interdisciplinary thought and innovative ideas based on a genuine will to protect our environment and to respect the natural resources of our planet, including sea resources and non-renewable natural resources, by ensuring that we share them fairly and reasonably.

The Summit confirmed and strengthened the principles proclaimed 10 years ago during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio.

I will not reiterate my country's positions and initiatives on these questions, as I discussed them at length at Johannesburg. I should like to reaffirm, however, that the Government of the Principality of

Monaco is determined to respect the commitments it undertook on that occasion.

The international community must continue to work tirelessly in the combat against AIDS and in the fight against many endemic diseases, which, in some parts of the world, are major obstacles to development and progress. In response to the appeal launched by our Secretary-General, my Government has decided this year and for the next two years to make a substantial exceptional contribution to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

If we want globalization, in particular economic globalization, to be of benefit to all, it will have to be rooted to a greater extent — and we all are aware of this — in a type of development that ignores neither the basic needs of human beings nor the values of justice, morality and equity, to which we all attach particular value.

In speaking of the fundamental principle of justice and of the moral values which have inspired our Organization so profoundly, I should like to reiterate how warmly we welcomed the recent entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The first Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute has just been held, under the eminent presidency of His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Decisive and specific steps were taken on that occasion.

I should like to close by appealing to the peoples of Israel and Palestine to put an end to the violence and to overcome their rancour and resentments. A shared heritage and the belief in a future of coexistence represent the underpinnings of a dialogue leading to peace.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Crown Prince of the Principality of Monaco for the statement he has just made.

His Serene Highness Prince Albert, Crown Prince of the Principality of Monaco, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable John Briceño, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Natural Resources, the Environment, Trade and Industry of Belize.

Mr. Briceño (Belize): On 21 September 1981 Belize joined the community of nations as an independent country, and we the people of Belize enthusiastically embraced our role as a partner in the community of nations.

The United Nations played a pivotal role in securing Belize's right to self-determination, and, as we commemorate our independence, we express our appreciation and continued support for the work of the Organization.

Since its inception in 1945 our United Nations has, like all of us, been grappling with the constant changes in our world. In its imperfection it has endured the problems of infancy, puberty and adolescence. Each adjustment provided occasions for learning and opportunities for growth. No, we have not always grown for the better; and we have suffered the cost of our mistakes.

Still the United Nations endured, for the principles of the Charter will reverberate as loudly tomorrow as they do today and did yesterday. Our right to live peaceful and dignified lives holds as true today as it did in 1945.

Two years ago world leaders assembled here in New York in an effort to rejuvenate the United Nations. This resulted in the Millennium Declaration and brought forth the Millennium Development Goals.

In these instruments we acknowledged the growing abyss between the few with plenty and the many with nothing. We made new commitments and reaffirmed old ones. We renewed yet again our ultimate goal of the improvement of humanity, a goal which we undoubtedly hold as sacred.

Since then we have held many meetings and conferences where we have merely recycled ideas and visions. Now we must aim for higher standards and make the case that, as a global community, we are obligated to account for how we have chosen to implement the many commitments we have made.

For us implementation is a function of resources; good governance, both locally and globally; shared responsibility; and partnerships. The implementation of the Millennium Declaration can be effective only through the participation and cooperation of all relevant stakeholders.

In order to ensure that the process of implementation is democratized, inclusive, transparent and accountable, we must act with shared responsibility and in partnerships of mutual respect and equality. As we follow the road map for the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, our deliberations and, even more so, our commitment to the Monterrey Consensus and to the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development should result in meaningful change that will improve the lives of our poorest peoples.

On 5 February 2002, Belize hosted the first-ever Caribbean Community (CARICOM), System of Central American Integration (SICA) and Dominican Republic summit. In the joint declaration issued at the conclusion of the summit, the Caribbean and Central American leaders agreed to strengthen their cooperation and to coordinate actions in areas such as education, health, poverty elimination, environment, trade and investment. Shortly our Foreign Ministers shall conclude a Plan of Action to implement the goals set out in the declaration.

The present development paradigm requires dynamic partnerships. Belize intends to play its part in encouraging closer collaboration and cooperation between Central America and the Caribbean.

A major hindrance to development is conflict; it is costly and causes unnecessary pain and suffering, often to innocent victims. My delegation is concerned about any notion that violence could be a solution to conflict. History has taught us that lasting peace can never be constructed in a climate of vengeance.

In this regard we express our grave concern over the continuing deterioration of relations in the Middle East, especially with respect to the Palestinian people. The escalation of violence in the region demonstrates the urgent need for the parties to resume peace negotiations.

The universally endorsed vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders, as called for by the Security Council in resolution 1397 (2002), should be realized as soon as possible.

We encourage the efforts of the United Nations in facilitating a peaceful resolution to the question of Western Sahara and support the Settlement Plan as a viable political solution to the dispute.

Conflict in its many manifestations finds its breeding ground in human desperation, frailty and ignorance. If we can address the needs of the disaffected and the vulnerable, then we can stamp out the embers of conflict and increase the potential for international peace and security. Yes, we must address those conditions according to our national capacity, but we cannot go it alone. A multilateral approach is imperative.

Belize continues to look to the United Nations for the global enforcement of human rights standards. On 1 July 2002, the international community witnessed the entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. As a State Party to the Statute, my Government will abide by its legal obligations thereunder and will uphold the integrity of the Court. It is our hope that all peace-loving and law-abiding nations of the world will become parties to the Rome Statute so that the universal jurisdiction of the Court can be realized. The Court presents the hope that there will be an end to impunity for the perpetrators of genocide, of other crimes against humanity and of war crimes. We see this as the start of a new system of international justice.

At this session of the General Assembly, we will be witnessing the expansion of the representative character of the United Nations. We recognize the tremendous contribution that the Swiss Confederation has made in international relations, particularly with respect to human rights and humanitarian issues. Its decision to become a full member of the United Nations will greatly enhance our work.

Likewise, we are pleased to welcome the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to our family of nations. Its struggle has been long and arduous, and its admission is a testament to the indispensable role of the United Nations.

It is our wish that the United Nations be the forum for the representation of all peoples of the world, including the 23 million people of the Republic of China on Taiwan. We must give true meaning to the principle of universality set forth in the Charter and, more specifically, to the affirmation therein of our faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.

With the support of the United Nations, Belize became an independent nation. Before and after that

time, we made every effort to resolve the territorial dispute between Belize and Guatemala, which we had inherited from colonial times. All previous attempts had proved futile, but in March 2000, at the start of this millennium, Guatemala and Belize agreed to initiate a unique process to resolve the dispute. Each of us appointed a Facilitator and asked the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS) to be honour witness to the process.

I am happy to be able to announce that, just yesterday, at OAS headquarters, the Facilitators presented their proposals for a peaceful and definitive resolution of the territorial dispute. The proposals must be submitted by referenda to the peoples of both countries, and only if accepted by both countries will they be translated into treaties of settlement that will bring this age-old dispute to an end and create better conditions for harmonious cooperation between the two countries — something for which both our peoples yearn. We fervently hope that that will indeed come to pass.

An essential aspect of the proposal involves a development trust fund, and we wish to thank all the countries that will generously contribute to making possible the peaceful settlement of a territorial dispute that has adversely affected relations not only between the countries involved, but also between the two subregions to which Belize belongs — the Caribbean and Central America.

Four days from today, our people will assemble and re-enact the events of our Independence Day. It will also be a time to renew our commitment to the principles of justice and liberty, to the right of a people to self-determination, to the right to development and to our continued commitment to live in peace with our neighbours. That is the legacy of the United Nations; that is our just objective.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Blas Ople, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines.

Mr. Ople (Philippines): As we welcome our newest members, Switzerland and East Timor, we reaffirm our faith in the United Nations and in the principles of the Charter.

Today, the United Nations faces more challenges and must respond to far more demands than were ever contemplated by its founders. Yet the Organization remains the single most important universal and viable forum for States to interact, for nations to work together and for countries to cooperate in preserving peace, in avoiding conflict and in promoting stability.

We believe that Iraq took a step in the right direction when it agreed yesterday to the unconditional return of United Nations weapons inspectors. But the immediate challenge facing the Organization and our world is the looming confrontation that could be brought about by the need for Iraq to comply, totally and unconditionally, with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We credit the diplomatic skills and the sheer determination of Secretary-General Kofi Annan and of the members of the Arab League with this welcome development. We will, therefore, await clear proof of sincerity in action.

But this is just a beginning. We believe that we are far from a true resolution of this issue. We must remain vigilant and must continue to have faith in the Security Council. The Philippines has full confidence in the Council process. We believe that the Council will act in accordance with the imperatives of world peace and security and that it will find the most expeditious and effective way to serve those imperatives.

Consistent with its national interest, and in accordance with its Constitution, the Philippines is prepared to extend political, security and humanitarian assistance to the United States and to the international community in the pursuit of their most vital interest, which coincides with our own vital interests: to defeat terrorism. The case for compliance is compelling. The charges are highly credible and have serious implications for global security. The Security Council should give those charges the most urgent and profound consideration. The international community has put the onus on Iraq to comply with the relevant Council resolutions, especially with regard to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

Yet we certainly live in a world of consequences that can be avoided. Poverty, intolerance and inequality provide the breeding ground for terrorism. But we need not make terrorism an unavoidable consequence of those factors. We have learned that in the one year since the shocking and tragic events of 11 September. In that short span of time, we have learned that terrorism cannot defeat us and that it cannot overcome our resolve to fight it, and we have learned the full

measure of the bravery of the men and women who stand on the front lines in the war against terror. In that short span of time, we have established new strategic partnerships and have retooled and rearmed existing strategic partnerships. Those partnerships are based on the belief that the world will never be secure unless terrorist lairs are exposed and destroyed and unless terrorist supporters are brought to justice.

In the realm of what is just and what is fair, we know that globalization can contribute to the comprehensive and sustainable development of the developing world. Indeed, in some cases it has done so. But the gap between the rich and poor countries continues to widen.

Let us again remind ourselves of the stark reality that 1.2 billion people live on less than $1 a day; 1.1 billion people lack access to safe and affordable drinking water; and 130 million school-age children, the majority of whom are girls, lack the means to stay in school.

The uneven spread of opportunities for the creation of wealth, and the increasing income inequality within and between countries, have pushed larger numbers of people to the margins of existence.

We in the Philippines are building an open economy. We are taking concrete measures to create an open trade and investment environment in our own country and in our region. We have adapted to the realities of globalization, fully aware of the concomitant risks, particularly those that impinge on the well-being of our vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

We firmly believe that, in general, developing countries accept the need for good governance in their public and corporate sectors. We are continuing our institutional reform, guided by our national priorities, requirements and capabilities. We are taking great pains to restructure our economy, often at high political cost.

Capital is what developing countries lack most in their pursuit of sustainable development. The Food and Agriculture Organization has estimated that an additional annual public investment of $24 billion must be made in poor countries in order to halve the number of hungry people by the United Nations millennium target date of 2015.

Developing countries need more foreign direct investment, particularly in areas that will promote the sustainable use of the environment and sustained growth. We also need improved access to foreign markets.

Many developing countries must also effectively compete in areas where their comparative advantage is great, such as agriculture. However, developing countries do not have the resources to match the subsidies that agricultural producers receive in rich countries, such as the 40 billion euros that European Union farmers receive each year or the additional $170 billion that United States farmers will receive over the next 10 years. We can only wonder what the liberating impact would be on development if the subsidies of 23 cents per dollar for farm goods in the United States or the 36 cents per dollar on farm goods in the European Union were instead invested in developing countries.

We need to reverse the decline in official development assistance, which remains below the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product. But we should also not lose sight of the fact that, aside from increased funding sources for developing countries, the flip side of the development coin should be greater restraint, care and flexibility in the use of conditionalities. Enhanced and effective debt relief, including for middle-income countries, is also needed.

Efforts to reform the international financial architecture and to strengthen the development dimension of the global trade and investment regime should be sustained.

Globalization has provided more opportunities and greater choices for people who want to travel the world in search of a livelihood. Some 10 per cent of the people of the Philippines are outside its border. Their safety and welfare is of paramount importance to us, particularly in times of actual or potential conflict. The welfare of migrant workers should be placed higher on the United Nations agenda now, before the migrant issue turns into a serious humanitarian problem. We can start by becoming States parties to the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. It is also important for developed nations to support the important work of humanitarian assistance agencies like the International Organization for Migration.

Despite the unprecedented wealth created in the last decade of the twentieth century, one out of every

five people live on less than $1 a day. The 32 poorest African countries do not earn much more than the richest man on earth, the title unofficially bestowed upon Bill Gates, the Chairman of Microsoft, in the United States. Despite the grinding poverty in which billions of people live, the world spends incredible sums for military purposes — for armies and weapons of mass annihilation.

Those bent on fomenting hate and violence will find willing adherents, particularly among the helpless, and hopeless poor, the dispossessed and the disenfranchised. The hungry, the young people who do not go to school and those living in the margins of society can become easy prey to the siren songs of terrorists and the perpetrators of violence. Poverty alleviation and development are therefore key strategies in preventing conflict and fighting terrorism.

Terrorism has become a major cause of violence and instability in our world. But this is not the only menace to our collective security. Organized crime, environmental degradation and contagious diseases continue to threaten international peace and security. The proliferation of conventional and non-conventional weapons, including small arms, is continuing. Civil wars and inter-State conflicts remain major causes of instability and underdevelopment. The United Nations must therefore continue to play its important peacekeeping and peacemaking role.

Durable peace and progress with freedom can be achieved only through international partnerships and a renewed faith in the United Nations, which should guarantee meaningful participation by developing countries in global decision-making. The challenges of the world today — potential and actual conflict, terrorism, violence, environmental degradation, organized crime and contagious diseases — recognize no boundaries and affect all.

In the eloquent language of the Philadelphia Declaration of the International Labour Organization, "poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere". That is the case because humanity — and human destiny — has become a seamless whole. No man is an island, and the bell tolls for us, too. This is the timeless vision of the United Nations, validated by all who have spoken here at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. It is a vision and a bond that should unite all nations as we face new dangers and the unmarked frontiers of our collective life on this small, endangered planet. Indeed, the United Nations continues to be the last best hope of mankind.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Kikwete (United Republic of Tanzania): I should like to begin by congratulating Mr. Kavan on his well-deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session and to assure him of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

I would also like to commend his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, for having skilfully presided over the work of the fifty-sixth session. Similarly, I would like to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, for the able manner in which he has continued to manage the day-to-day affairs of our Organization in the face of numerous and daunting challenges.

My delegation wishes to join others in welcoming the admission to the United Nations of Switzerland, a country that has done so much for the Organization over the years. I would also like to welcome East Timor to the community of nations, following the successful tutelage of the United Nations.

As we commemorate the first anniversary of the tragic events of the 11 September terrorist attacks, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Tanzania's solidarity and support for international efforts to fight terrorism. Coming from a country that experienced a similar tragedy four years ago, I understand the continued pain and suffering of those who lost their loved ones as they come to terms with the aftermath of those tragic events. We have every confidence that, through our collective efforts, the war on terrorism will ultimately be won.

It is a welcome coincidence that the fifty-seventh session should be held so soon after the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Tanzania is glad that poverty eradication was underscored as humanity's critical challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, particularly in the developing countries.

It was very gratifying, indeed, to note that due regard was also given to the burning issues of

education, health, energy, shelter, water and sanitation, as well as agriculture, in particular food security. The abundance of pledges from all speakers and participants to fight poverty, promote social and economic development and enhance measures to deal with pollution and protect the environment was very reassuring indeed. However, many stakeholders, including those from my country, are anxiously waiting to see how we move beyond rhetoric to concrete action.

Those of us from the developing countries know too well in this regard that our biggest challenge is to get our act together by practicing and observing good governance, democracy, the rule of law and human rights. We have to institute sound political, social and economic policies, as well as to fight corruption and graft. We have to create conditions conducive to investment flows and trade. Fortunately, this is no longer wanting, because most of our countries have made serious efforts to meet these ideals with reasonable success. However, it is frustrating to note that there is little appreciation of these achievements. Instead, there is amplification of the little that is yet to be overcome. Many of us feel that we deserve to be treated better.

It is surprising also to note the temptation in some quarters to evolve a new paradigm in international relations — that of assigning collective responsibility, condemnation and punishment to a region or continent for the mistakes of one country in that part of the world. A crisis in an African country, for example, is meant to be left to African countries to fix and they are threatened with being held responsible and accountable if that is not done. Several times, we have been reminded to sort out the problem in some crisis-stricken African countries or else risk losing cooperation on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) from the developed countries.

Tanzania considers such tendencies not only to be strange, but also dangerous, unfair, discriminatory and totally unacceptable. Let all of us continue to work together to resolve problems facing our countries and peoples wherever they may occur.

We look forward to seeing the developed countries of the North play their part, as is expected of them, as expressed in the millennium development goals, the Monterrey Consensus, the Brussels Plan of Action for the least developed countries, the Doha agreement and the Johannesburg Plan of Action and at yesterday's historic high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on support for NEPAD. We consider the role of the developed countries to be very critical to success in the war against poverty and the attainment of sustainable development. We look forward to seeing the countries of the North increase official development assistance to the countries of the South.

At Monterrey, Kananaskis and Johannesburg, there were good signs that this is now possible. However, when one looks at the resource requirement of the millennium goals and the time frame for implementation, the promises made are far below target. At Monterrey and Kananaskis, some $12 billion were pledged over a period of three to four years, whereas the requirement is $50 billion annually until 2015. We appeal to the developed countries to commit more resources and within the time frames set out in the millennium development goals.

Another important area where the intervention of the developed countries is essential is debt relief. Debt servicing is crippling the economies and Governments of the poor developing countries. Debt relief releases resources which can be used to finance priority sectors and activities, such as education, health, energy, water, rural roads and microfinance schemes.

Let me take the example of my country, Tanzania. After reaching the completion point for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative and the cancellation of a portion of the external debt, Government expenditure on basic social services has increased to unprecedented levels. We will now be able to give clean water to more people than we could have done in the past. We are now able to hire more teachers, build more classrooms, take more students into schools and buy more textbooks and teaching materials. We have improved health-care delivery systems. We have hired more medical practitioners in rural dispensaries and health centres and we have provided more equipment and medicines. There are more rural roads maintained now than before and new ones are being opened up. The list of benefits is long and we could have done much more if we had got a bigger debt-cancellation package. That is why we continue to appeal for deeper debt cancellation for Tanzania and the rest of the least developed countries. Moreover, the amount of debt that has not been forgiven to my country is not payable, given our level of poverty.

Debt cancellation or relief on its own cannot solve the resource needs of developing countries. Measures to make capital and financial resources available for investments and trade in the developing countries are very important. To date, not much has come to our part of the world, despite our having put in place the most competitive investment incentives. May I once again appeal to the Governments of the developed countries to intervene in the most judicious way possible to encourage investment flows to Africa and the developing countries. I believe that their words of encouragement and support will have a positive impact.

Market access is another very important matter for us. We highly appreciate and thank the United States and the European Union for granting duty-free and quota-free access for goods from Africa and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States respectively. This has acted as an important stimulus to increased production and investments in our countries. We welcome similar decisions taken by Japan, Canada and China, thus further expanding Africa's market access. However, agricultural subsidies in the developed countries remain an obstacle to which we again appeal to the developed countries to give due consideration.

As we all know, it is in agriculture that we have the best of the comparative advantage. Unhindered access to the markets of the developed countries, therefore, could have immeasurable benefits. I am of the view that the developed countries can afford to dispense with subsidies to agriculture. Instead, the $1 billion spent on such subsidies daily could be used to fund the implementation of millennium development goals.

Among today's daunting global challenges are the conflict situations in Africa and the escalation of violence in the Middle East. We highly appreciate the proactive role played by the United Nations, countries of the respective regions and the international community in trying to mediate and end the conflicts. We pray for the continued involvement of the international community in putting an end to conflicts.

The framework for the resumption of negotiations between Israel and the Government of Palestine already exists. Both sides must create an environment conducive to negotiations. There has to be an end to Israeli occupation of Arab lands and significant movement towards the creation of a viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel as an imperative to lasting peace in the Middle East. The security concerns of Israel should be addressed and encoded properly in any agreement. In this regard, all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions must be adhered to.

It is our conviction that, without the active involvement of a third party, not much can be achieved. Tanzania is convinced that the Security Council, as well as the United States, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the Arab League, can play a pivotal role in getting to a sustainable solution. Fortunately, all of these are now actively involved. We appeal to them to remain seized of the problem and to continue to work together.

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi remains a major concern and preoccupation of Tanzania and other countries in the region. I want to reaffirm the continued commitment and readiness of my Government to contribute in any way possible towards building a peaceful, secure and stable Great Lakes region.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is encouraging to note that there are some positive developments following the recent agreement and understanding reached between that country, Rwanda and Uganda. It is our hope that the implementation of the agreements and understanding will be scrupulously observed. We welcome the undertaking of the United Nations and the Republic of South Africa to help the parties.

The security situation in Burundi is fragile. The new transitional Government installed on 1 November 2001 is functioning, but the continuation of the civil war seems to be undermining its base. Tanzania underscores the significance of getting a ceasefire agreement for the sake of the people of Burundi and the success of the transitional Government. It was in appreciation of that imperative that my President accepted the request of the facilitator and that of President Pierre Buyoya of Burundi for Tanzania to help urge the rebels to come to the negotiating table.

Mr. Mamba (Swaziland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We tried our best and, as a result, the Burundi Government and the rebels started direct talks in Dar es

Salaam on 12 August. The negotiations are continuing. They are not easy, but we are confident that they will be crowned with success. Tanzania will continue to assist in and work for the success of the negotiations. We do so on the clear understanding that we stand to gain more from a peaceful and stable Burundi and to lose if there is war and lack of stability. The end of the refugee problem, as well as the end of mistrust between our two Governments and the free flow of trade across our common borders, are the obvious benefits which we long to see realized.

One of the serious consequences of the conflicts in the Great Lakes region has been the massive displacement of people and the influx of refugees, which constitute a huge burden for Tanzania. At present, Tanzania is hosting close to a million refugees from Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While we appreciate the work being done by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian agencies to protect the refugees, much remains to be done to offset the burden which these refugees place upon my country. We would like to see more being done to facilitate repatriation of the refugees.

Unfortunately, the 1951 Convention is not as elaborate concerning the responsibilities of refugee-generating countries or those of the international community as it is on the responsibilities of the refugee-receiving countries. This is probably due to the context in which the Convention was conceived. The situation has changed. Tanzania feels strongly that there is a need to review the 1951 Convention to keep it in step with changing times and circumstances.

The long and protracted war in Angola appears to have ended. However, Angola still needs the continued support of the international community to deal with the reconstruction and the huge humanitarian crisis facing the country. Tanzania welcomes the decision on continued United Nations involvement.

With regard to Western Sahara, Tanzania firmly believes that the United Nations cannot, and must not, retreat from this unfinished agenda. Tanzania wishes to reiterate its longstanding support for the efforts of the United Nations, which will enable the Sahrawi people to exercise their right to self-determination.

While we appreciate the progress made in the reform of the working methods of the Security Council, we remain concerned that no movement has been recorded in the area of expansion of membership. Tanzania would like to reiterate its support for Africa's quest for two permanent seats.

In his address to the Assembly on 4 October 1996, my President, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, said:

> "The founding of the United Nations was inspired by the human solidarity which the world sought to promote five decades ago... What holds our nations together, despite their diversity, is the common bond and solidarity we feel for each other as human beings. Today, more than ever before, we need that solidarity in order to deal with the myriad problems we all face together". (*A/51/PV.22, p. 5*)

These words were relevant then, and they are still relevant today.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Slobodan Casule, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mr. Casule (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): At the outset, allow me to congratulate Mr. Jan Kavan on his election to the most prestigious post of President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. My delegation is fully confident that his skilful leadership will bring success to this session.

I wish to avail myself of this opportunity also to congratulate the outgoing President, Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea, for his tireless efforts and dedication in performing his duties.

The United Nations community has recently become richer with the admission to its membership of the Swiss Confederation. Though the valuable contribution of that country to the goals of the United Nations was undisputed even before its formal membership, I congratulate the Swiss Federation on this decision. We are also looking forward to East Timor's joining the Organization, which will take place soon.

The heinous acts of 11 September 2001, which struck New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, have brought the international community to a critical juncture, where it is faced with an ultimate challenge: how to find a way to successfully cope with the indiscriminate effects and devastating consequences of acts of international terrorism.

The promptness with which the world reacted and the solidarity expressed through the broadest coalition ever against terrorism was exemplary. The United Nations took the lead in combating international terrorism. The Republic of Macedonia, itself a victim of terrorist aggression, has joined the international coalition and is making its contribution to this end.

Two days ago, on Sunday, 15 September, my country held, for the fourth time, free and democratic elections. They marked the progress achieved over the past year, and the fact that they went smoothly reaffirmed our commitment to democracy and to the rule of law. They also reaffirmed the maturity of Macedonian society, its Government and its citizens, thus once again establishing its position as an equal and respected member of the European family.

Our elections — an outstanding democratic achievement — are clear proof that all along Macedonia has been seeking political and democratic solutions. They represent an outstanding example of the fact that democracy, elections and political freedom are the most effective mechanisms for a society and its needs, and the most efficient answer to violence as an instrument for achieving political goals.

Terrorism has more than once proved itself not only an unworthy ally, but also a dangerous bedfellow — one that always turns against those who use it in their pursuit of social change or justice.

Therefore, there must be no double standards when dealing with political extremism and terrorism, because, as we have proved, there is not one issue that cannot be dealt with politically, or, better yet, through elections and dialogue, as we have done.

The crises in recent history have shown more clearly than ever the importance of cooperation and solidarity among the countries of our region, as well as the importance of developing regional collective security mechanisms in South-eastern Europe. Macedonia, for its part, is making every effort to make its contribution to strengthening cooperation within various regional organizations and initiatives. Further improvement of good-neighbourly relations remains one of the priorities of the foreign policy of the Republic of Macedonia.

Allow me in this context to reiterate our firm stance as to the need for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) concerning Kosovo. The Republic of Macedonia has provided continuous support for the efforts of the international community and has always met the requests of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and KFOR in regard to the successful fulfilment of their mandate. We support the UNMIK policy of "benchmarks" and believe that it will facilitate the building of a democratic, multi-ethnic society and strengthen the rule of law in Kosovo.

Let me recall here the agreement on delineation and demarcation of the border between the Republic of Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, whose implementation on the ground is to start soon.

At this point, let me stress that efforts aimed at undermining the validity of the Agreement, such as the ones we witnessed early this year by the local self-government and Assembly of Kosovo, should be definitively rejected and nullified. In that sense, we support the reaction of the Security Council, which determined that this action was null and void.

There are still many challenges ahead of us in the region. All of our goodwill and efforts to provide sustainable stability will not yield results unless we seriously address the real problems present in the region as a consequence of 10 years of wars and instability. Organized crime, various forms of trafficking in drugs, arms, human beings and so on, which most often spur extremism and terrorism, have not been adequately taken into account. National measures do not suffice to eliminate these phenomena. Strong involvement and support on the part of the international community is also indispensable.

Allow me to inform the Assembly that the Republic of Macedonia will once again this year submit a draft resolution on the maintenance of international security, good-neighbourliness, stability and development in South-eastern Europe. The draft resolution addresses the complexity of the problems of disarmament, stability and development in this region.

The combat against terrorism must not distract us from other important issues on the United Nations agenda. The Millennium Summit and the Secretary-General's road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration have both identified the direction of future United Nations activities, to which we commit ourselves: the eradication of poverty, the struggle against AIDS, conflict prevention and protection of the environment.

The draft resolution will address the complexity of the problems of disarmament, stability and development in this region.

The struggle against terrorism must not detract from other important issues on the United Nations agenda. The Millennium Summit and the Secretary-General's road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/56/326) go hand in hand in identifying the direction of future United Nations activities, to which we commit ourselves: the eradication of poverty, the struggle against HIV/AIDS, conflict prevention and the protection of the environment.

Globalization remains one of the most important issues on the international agenda. It is obvious that there are some essential problems that need to be addressed immediately. In the new millennium, it is crucial that the international community address the development agenda in a more comprehensive way and improve the status of the protection of and respect for other fundamental human rights and freedoms. In that context, the implementation of the goals set at the International Conference on Financing for Development and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development — together with the special session on children, the most important events of the United Nations this year — require the strong political will and commitment of Member States during the forthcoming review period. In that regard, I wish to use this opportunity to welcome the United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development adopted yesterday by the General Assembly as resolution 57/2.

There is a need to build stronger partnerships with other relevant organizations beyond the United Nations system, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as with the business community, non-governmental organizations and others, in order for them to be closely engaged in the process. The fact that every fourth State Member of our Organization is classified as least developed is certainly no credit to any of us. That is why this issue must be given the highest priority.

On disarmament matters, while the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects and the adopted Programme of Action marked a significant first step at the global level towards preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, we believe that there is a need for an enhanced follow-up process. The problem of small arms and proliferation has been a particular concern of the Republic of Macedonia and the broader region. It poses a serious threat not only to my country's security and stability, but also to the region at large. Therefore, it is necessary to take strong action to combat the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons.

Strengthening the role and relevance of our Organization should remain a topical issue on the United Nations agenda. Additional efforts should be made particularly to strengthen United Nations preventive and peacekeeping capacities.

Making progress on issues of equitable representation and reform of the Security Council is no less important. We are looking forward to the deliberations this year of the Open-ended Working Group, aimed at achieving meaningful progress towards making the Security Council more representative and transparent, while preserving and improving its effectiveness for the maintenance of international peace and stability.

The Republic of Macedonia has from the very beginning been a strong supporter of the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and was one of the first 60 States to ratify the Rome Statute, which entered into force on 1 July 2002. We support the efforts of the ICC to become truly universal, while believing that the concerns expressed regarding the possibility of politically motivated prosecutions can be addressed in a way that will not compromise the spirit of the Court.

The world today faces new challenges. Undoubtedly, the most important is the redefinition of the very essence of international relations. That effort to instil new values is questioned by regimes and rogue leaders who belong to the past and who, contradicting progress, have survived.

We are, at this moment, all mesmerized by the development of events surrounding Iraq and the Middle East as a whole. Problems like these demand solutions. Many measures are being considered today, but they must be based on a common conviction that our main task is to construct a new and better world and that these extraordinary steps are not our primary goal.

Therefore, it is the firm conviction of the Republic of Macedonia that our most important tools must be dialogue and mutual understanding. We know that very well. The Republic of Macedonia — being at the heart of the Balkans and of South-Eastern Europe, where over centuries various cultures and civilizations have left many traces, where Christianity and Islam have struggled for dominance and where ethnicities have become interwoven — had every reason to support the proclamation of 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. As a follow-up and a practical contribution implementing the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, the Republic of Macedonia will host in November of this year, in Ohrid — a World Heritage city of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization — a regional forum on dialogue among civilizations, the first gathering of that kind in the region of South-Eastern Europe.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Didier Opertti, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay and former President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Opertti (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The profound and dizzying change that took place in the world during the last decade, with the end of the cold war and the acceleration of the process of globalization, did not bring with it the ideal international society for which we had hoped, and world peace now seems as elusive as ever. That is the great challenge the Organization must face as we begin another session of the General Assembly, whose relevance as a coordinating body for the international community is again being put to the test.

The events of September 2001 radically changed the perception of security in the world. The main threat to international peace and stability now comes in the form of organized multinational clandestine groups which, having wide access to weapons and financial resources, seek to sow terror with a total lack of basic human feeling.

Despite its cultural and religious diversity and the diversity of its political systems, and notwithstanding the marked differences in levels of development, the international community reacted to terrorism with a deep and resolute sense of solidarity, which is reflected in its decision to combat it vigorously within the framework of international law, through the relevant conventions and fulfilment of the obligations stemming from the Security Council, based on the principles of the Charter and on respect for human rights. In facing that scourge, we must not forget what the President of Uruguay, Jorge Batlle, said in his address to the General Assembly last year in reference to terrorism:

> "to fight it, it will also be necessary to move against other enemies of peace, such as poverty and underdevelopment, to give to every person good reason to live and to make all of us guardians of humankind, which is a common good from which no one must feel excluded, and for which we must fight unwaveringly". (*A/56/PV.44, p. 19*)

It must also be borne in mind that that ubiquitous and anonymous enemy — terrorism — invokes political pretexts related to unresolved conflicts. In that regard, Uruguay reiterates its confidence that the Palestinian authorities will show proof of their peaceful aspirations through their acts. At the same time, we call on the Government of Israel to make all the efforts necessary to return to the negotiating table, as the only way to achieve lasting peace.

We retain our optimism in the face of all those challenges. We wish to highlight two positive developments that demonstrate that the international community is moving in the right direction: the first is the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which will contribute to the maintenance of peace by preventing, deterring and punishing the most serious international crimes that individuals can commit.

My country, Uruguay, by signing and ratifying the Rome Statute, indicated its willingness to contribute to the important process of the development and strengthening of international law through the establishment of permanent legal institutions.

Secondly, the world has this year laid the groundwork for the management of the broad spectrum of the positive and negative effects of globalization. The recent Summit on Sustainable Development represents the culmination of a process that complements the results of the Monterrey Summit on Financing for Development and the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), held at Doha, which will enable the international community to coordinate its efforts to eradicate poverty and to promote global development by increasing

development assistance and liberalizing trade in a sustainable manner.

The overall conclusion to be drawn from these conferences is clear. If the developing countries are not given equal opportunities and conditions, both with respect to the elimination of subsidies and unfair trade practices and with respect to market access, then those countries — the particularly small and developing countries — will continue to suffer the negative effects of globalization without enjoying its benefits, thereby aggravating the political, social and economic situation in the vast majority of States in the international community. This is the path to deadlock.

Uruguay, with its firm commitment to multilateralism, belongs, at the regional level, to the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), together with Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, as well as Bolivia and Chile. MERCOSUR, which is now a decade old — it has been in existence since the Asunción Treaty of 1991 — has established itself as an effective actor within the international community, going beyond the dimension of an economic project to play an active role as a stabilizer of democracy in the region, thus consolidating the rule of law and full respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights.

It is therefore as a member of MERCOSUR that Uruguay has opted for an ambitious policy of trade liberalization characterized by the principle of transparency. It hopes that the other trading blocs in the developed world will apply the same principles and avoid the duplicity inherent in advocating the need to promote free trade on the one hand, while at the same time protecting one's markets with discriminatory practices. We therefore ask for reciprocity from our trading partners.

We must not forget that this is the reason why we are now facing increasing difficulty in achieving our development goals. Uruguay, like many other countries in other regions of the world, is experiencing an economic and financial crisis that was completely unavoidable as a result of the severe impact of regional, extra-regional and external factors. This was attributable to our increasing dependency on foreign trade, to the fall in the international prices of our products, to the implementation of subsidies and to other protectionist measures by the developed countries, and to the rapid spread of the crisis in the financial systems of the main exporting markets.

To this we must add another tragic irony. Our export products, which are mainly agricultural, cannot compete with similar goods from other countries because of their higher cost, which results from the fact that Uruguay fulfils all of its international obligations in the labour and social fields, particularly with regard to child labour, the work of women, the minimum wage, social benefits and working conditions. Nevertheless, the developed countries preach respect for human rights, the strengthening of social security and the fulfilment of those obligations, while at the same time purchasing products that are produced at lower cost, in violation of international legal obligations.

The phenomenon of globalization, which has developed thus far without a proper cooperation framework, appears to be the cause of many of these problems. We continue to believe that it is within this Organization that we must continue to explore ways that will lead to a political solution to the principal problems that we all face.

On the one hand the United Nations is the obvious body to manage the impact of globalization. In this process of constant change — which is accelerated, no doubt, by the technological advances of the so-called information society — we recognize the potential that information technology innovations have for the development of democracy and the economy as well as social progress, and we note with great interest that the World Summit on the Information Society will be held next year.

Furthermore, we must bring to life once again the true purpose and meaning of international economic cooperation. True solidarity is reflected not only in the undertaking of commitments at international summits and conferences. It is expressed above all in the faithful discharge of these commitments by each State, in particular developed countries. This is the only way in which developing countries can move beyond their low levels of progress and achieve sustainable development.

All of this requires the introduction of changes in the organs and in the procedures of the United Nations in order to ensure better representativity in its structure and to enhance the efficiency of its functioning. The reform of the Security Council and the revitalization of the General Assembly are tasks that are still pending and which we must continue to pursue.

Uruguay has confidence in multilateral mechanisms for preserving and building international peace and security. It is a signatory to the San Francisco Charter and since 1952 has contributed troops to 13 United Nations peacekeeping missions. We take pride in the fact that the more than 1,500 members of our military and police forces currently participating in peacekeeping operations represent this firm commitment and our belief in this Organization.

Therefore Uruguay shares in its entirety the eloquent and passionate advocacy of multilateralism reflected in the Secretary-General's statement last week in this very Hall. Like Mr. Kofi Annan, the people and the Government of Uruguay reaffirm their genuine commitment to multilateralism, deeply rooted in our spirit and based on principle, on tradition and on conviction.

The most recent political developments, in terms of the crisis posed by Iraq, is in our view proof of the need for balance which can be achieved only within the framework of mutilateralism.

In conclusion, I should like to warmly and sincerely congratulate you, Sir, on the manner in which you have been accomplishing your work, which we know will be successful. We also welcome the two new Members who are joining the Organization — the Swiss Confederation and Timor-Leste. We know that under your leadership, this will be a fruitful and successful session of the Assembly.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Union and Senegalese Living Abroad of Senegal.

Mr. Gadio (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is particularly pleased to convey to Mr. Jan Kavan its heartfelt congratulations and fervent hopes for success in the lofty and important task ahead of him. His well-deserved election to the presidency of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly is a fitting tribute to the spirit of the Czech people as well as to his outstanding intellectual and moral qualities.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to say how much we appreciated the courtesy, the commitment and the competence of his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, who guided our discussions in such an outstanding manner. We express to him our sincere and deep gratitude for his many relevant initiatives, including working visits to West Africa, particularly to Senegal, which are testimony of friendship for my country and support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

I should like also like to express once again to Secretary-General Kofi Annan our admiration for his steadfast determination in serving the ideals and causes of our Organization. Thanks to his wisdom and far-sightedness, the United Nations has found new vigour with which to meet the tremendous challenges confronting humankind.

It is therefore fitting that our Organization — which more than ever needs the widest support for its plans and projects for a better management of the affairs of our globalized world — is gaining two new Members: Switzerland and, soon, East Timor. To the delegations of those two friendly countries, I would like to express Senegal's warmest congratulations and our conviction that their contribution will undoubtedly be enriching for our Organization, whose universal character will thereby be reinforced.

It is precisely in the name of the principle of the universality of the United Nations that Senegal reiterates its fervent wish to see the Republic of China on Taiwan join the concert of nations and assume its full responsibilities in our Organization and its specialized agencies. Granting that request, following the good precedent of the World Trade Organization, would bring justice to the 23 million inhabitants of the Republic of China on Taiwan, who through their exemplary conduct on the world stage have already given proof of Taipei's attachment to the noble objectives of the San Francisco Charter.

Last week, the United Nations and the international community commemorated the anniversary of the tragic events of 11 September 2001. We express once again our sincere sentiments of sympathy and compassion to the thousands of American and other families in mourning. Senegal, its head of State and its Government strongly reiterate their steadfast determination to fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whatever its motivations and whoever its perpetrators and sponsors. Senegal proclaims loudly and clearly that there is no reason or cause sufficiently just or sufficiently good that it could justify an act of terrorism against pregnant women and other innocent civilians.

The Dakar Declaration against Terrorism, adopted on 17 October 2001 at the initiative of President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, gives full expression to our fervent wish to strengthen regional and subregional cooperation in order to dismantle the menace of terrorist activities on our continent. Let us remember the heinous and unrepentant terrorist strikes against the African people in Kenya and Tanzania. Nor do we forget the heroic daily resistance of the Algerian people in the face of repeated assaults by killers blinded by their hatred and not by their faith in God, at least not in the God of love and compassion that we Muslims proudly call Allah.

To that end, Senegal submitted some months ago to the African Union a draft additional protocol to the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism of the Organization of African Unity and the African Union. The draft protocol aims to strengthen the Algiers Convention and to adapt it to the post-11-September context. Also, my delegation welcomes the fine initiative of the Commission of the African Union, which recently held in Algiers a high-level intergovernmental meeting on terrorism in Africa. In other words, we have the common responsibility to maintain and to strengthen the international mobilization against terrorist networks and their financing.

My Government welcomes the excellent work already carried out by the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee pursuant to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). Senegal encourages the Committee to pursue its efforts and requests the Working Group of the General Assembly's Sixth Committee to do everything to hasten the adoption of a comprehensive international convention against terrorism.

It is a truism that the fight against terrorism is a part of the international community's struggle to promote international peace and security. That is the objective that over the past months has not escaped our Organization, which has strived to find lasting solutions to conflicts that destroy the social and economic fabric of numerous countries, especially in Africa.

In that regard, Senegal keenly appreciates the determined commitment of the Security Council, which, more conscious than ever of its role of guarantor of international peace and security, has devoted a large portion of its work this year to conflicts and tensions afflicting the African continent. Among the numerous praiseworthy initiatives of the Security Council, I would like to mention the convening of special meetings devoted to the situation of Africa, brilliantly presided over by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Mauritius and Singapore during their respective presidencies.

On behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), of which Senegal currently holds the chairmanship, I would like to nurture the hope that the United Nations will stay the course in order to forever stave off violence and wars, which take a serious financial toll on the future of many African countries. I am thinking of Sierra Leone, where the current exemplary normalization of the political and economic situation has largely been facilitated by the holding of free, transparent, democratic and peaceful elections.

It is urgent that the bells of peace, which have sounded in Freetown, also be heard in Monrovia, where the absence of political dialogue led the way to grave socio-economic instability, whose contagious effect could turn out to be disastrous for the Mano River Union area. Senegal, as Chairman of ECOWAS, is working tirelessly and hopes to be able to report to the Assembly on its many initiatives under way, which could very shortly lay the foundations of peace in Liberia.

In Sierra Leone and Liberia, as in Guinea-Bissau, where the Government of President Kumba Yalá is attempting with courage and abnegation to lift the country out of a financial and economic crisis following a trying civil war, the international community has the duty to continue more steadfastly its valuable assistance. In that regard, I welcome the strong signal sent by the Security Council under the United States presidency to financial backers with respect to granting Guinea-Bissau substantial financial aid so that it can firmly return to the path of peace and prosperity.

The interest in that neighbour of Senegal and in our subregion recalls the wise and timely decision to establish at Dakar an Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. That Office should promote better coordination among the activities of the United Nations in our subregion and their greater impact on the ground. I am

pleased to sincerely congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan on that clear-sighted initiative. It goes without saying that the Office will enjoy the enthusiastic support and complete cooperation of the Government of Senegal.

Allow me to recall the activities of President Abdoulaye Wade in benefit of the great African people of Madagascar. His personal and total involvement in mediating a solution to the Madagascar crisis has, as a great international statesman said, surely spared the people of that great island a drift towards a civil war of incalculable consequences. He and his African colleagues who have taken up that issue have shown the world that with the strong support of the international community Africans will prove that they are also and above all peacemakers.

Elsewhere, beyond the African continent but so close to our hearts, we observe a growing danger in the Middle East. This year again, the world has witnessed unheard-of violence in the Palestinian territories, where the occupying military Power, Israel, has decidedly opted for State violence, which leads to concepts as dangerous as the so-called targeted assassinations and other preventive operations.

On the Palestinian side, that situation has caused an increase in terrorist cells — specialists in suicide belts — groups that we unequivocally and resolutely condemn. That network has produced an erosion of trust between Israelis and Palestinians — trust that must be restored as swiftly as possible through frank and constructive dialogue that leads to a just and lasting solution.

In order to achieve that, it is imperative that Tel Aviv comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions — in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) — and that it also adhere to the peace plan proposed by Saudi Arabia and to the initiatives of the Quartet, which set out the basic principles of land for peace and withdrawal for normalization. The international community, in particular the Security Council and the Quartet, has the critical duty to formulate a bold plan to realize the vision of two States within the 1967 borders and to hasten what Senegal has continued to call for in all international forums: the immediate convening of an international conference on Palestine, leading to a specific mechanism that would address political, economic and security issues and having as its starting point the creation of a sovereign Palestinian State side by side an Israeli State, living in peace and harmony with its neighbours.

Over the past 12 months, the international scene has been dominated by the holding of three major conferences that were crucial events in humanity's collective march towards a more just and more unified world: the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, held at Doha, Qatar; the International Conference on Financing for Development, held at Monterrey, Mexico; and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held at Johannesburg, South Africa. Those world conferences and the strong alliances that they created will allow humanity to enter the third millennium on a positive note.

I should like to note here that, in the light of those statements of good intentions, the time for action has come. We must act swiftly so that globalization, a phenomenon that affects us all, will ultimately benefit us all. Up to now, despite its certain virtues, globalization seems to have caused greater marginalization of the vast majority of the peoples of the South. As a consequence, it is urgent that we identify innovative mechanisms of development financing. In fact, even if official development assistance is still valuable for the States of the South, its effectiveness will be limited without the addition of concrete measures such as access for products of the South to markets of the North, an increase in foreign direct investment flows to developing countries, particularly those in Africa, and the initiating role that, we must recognize, belongs to the international and African private sectors. Indeed, Senegal is convinced that no country in the world has ever developed through official development assistance. The private sector, infrastructure and education are universally acknowledged as the tripod of genuine sustainable development. It is no less urgent, following the much-appreciated appointment of a High Representative of the Secretary-General for the Least Developed Countries, that we all commit ourselves to implementing the Brussels Programme of Action, in conformity with the consensus of the 12th Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 49, held at Cotonou from 5 to 7 August 2002.

The success of such initiatives cannot depend on Governments alone. We need to build firm partnerships with local communities, with civil society actors, with

the private sector, with non-governmental organizations and with international organizations. It is fitting that humanity's oldest continent should be proud of the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a double partnership — internal and international — and a linkage, on the one hand, among Africans and, on the other, between Africa and the rest of the international community, which has already shown its full support for that new initiative. As evidence, I cite the Group of Eight Africa Action Plan and the holding of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to consider how to support NEPAD.

Through NEPAD, which has the merit of defining the prerequisites for African development, of identifying sectoral priorities and of developing a resource mobilization strategy, African leaders — among them His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal — intend to demonstrate that the responsibility for Africa's development is essentially theirs. In that context, I must mention the launching of the African Union in July at Durban, South Africa. We hope that its Peace and Security Council, coupled with NEPAD's Peer Review Mechanism, will lead to strong commitments by our heads of State, first for our people and then for our partners, which are very concerned by the central questions of good governance and conflict prevention and resolution.

Our development concerns do not preclude our demands for human rights. That is why my country attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children. At the initiative of the Government, a major programme is under way to combat, in particular, violence against women and the trafficking and exploitation of women and children for commercial and sexual purposes. In those areas, the strategy formulated and implemented by Senegal is based on action plans adopted at the special session of the General Assembly on Beijing +5 and on the follow-up to the World Summit on Children.

As is its custom, Senegal wishes to honour and praise the great role of women in the world, in particular their African sisters, as the foundation and the powerful engine of African renewal. History will take note that it is Senegal that, through its President, has demanded and ensured that each of the five subregions of Africa elect at least one woman in its quota of two Commissioners to the Commission of the African Union. Africa is thus teaching the rest of the world a lesson in unprecedented parity, which is more proof — if it were needed — that, if we seek competent women, we will find them.

At the initiative of its President, Senegal will organize, on 10 October at Dakar, a special summit of heads of State or Government of ECOWAS to follow up the results of the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to children.

The rights of women and children are integral elements of human rights, and my country reaffirms its attachment to the principles of the universality, interdependence and indivisibility of human rights, of good economic and political governance and of the rule of law. It is that democratic imperative that has prompted the head of State of Senegal to strengthen our institutional arsenal by creating the position of Commissioner of Human Rights, to which a woman has been appointed.

As members are aware, Senegal was the first country in the world to ratify the Rome Statute for the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC), whose entry into force on 1 July 2002 my country welcomed. That commitment resulted in my Government's decision to present a candidate for judge on the ICC — one of our finest magistrates and a specialist in criminal law.

In conclusion, I should like, in recalling the urgency of confronting humanity's numerous challenges, to express the earnest hope that the Organization will bolster its ability to better serve the legitimate hopes of the world's peoples. Undoubtedly that path will anchor the future of a world reconciled with itself, where justice, freedom, peace and prosperity will be jealously preserved in justice and freedom, in peace and prosperity, and in the dignity of human beings — all human beings.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Souef Mohamed El-Amine, Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, la Francophonie, the Environment and in charge of Comorians Living Abroad of the Comoros.

Mr. El-Amine (Comoros) (*spoke in French*): A year has gone by since the entire world mourned the victims of the World Trade Center tragedy and condemned the barbaric acts most formally. Today, from this rostrum, on behalf of the Union of the

Comoros and the Comorian people, I wish to evoke the memory of all those who in the United States and elsewhere have suffered injustice at the hands of those who have acted outside faith or law. We condemn terrorism in all its forms.

Allow me to congratulate President Kavan warmly on behalf of the delegation of the Union of the Comoros, which I have the honour to head. I also wish to convey the trust and confidence that we have in him to lead the work of this session, based on his experience, personal qualities and diplomatic expertise. Permit me also to convey to His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo our great pleasure and admiration by recognizing the outstanding work he did as President of the previous session. I wish to convey a strong tribute to His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, our Secretary-General, for his constant devotion in the service of our Organization.

The Union of the Comoros heartily welcomes Switzerland and Timor-Leste as new Members of our Organization. The United Nations is an organization whose duty it is to assure humankind the conditions of living in peace, dignity and prosperity. This is an enormous and large-scale task that surely poses certain daunting difficulties that we will need to overcome. This must be so, because in no way must we or should we shrink away from obstacles and challenges. This institution must be the true guarantor of the hopes of present and future generations.

This requires a true awareness of its universality, which calls for reforming its main organs. These organs must be in a position to reflect and adapt to the reality of the present world.

Furthermore, and in a different context, this new political framework must go hand in hand with development, a development that takes into account the inequalities, but also the specificities of each place. There are many evils gnawing at our planet, but they affect us in different degrees. The advances of the technological world of the North contrast with the fierce struggle of the South, even now in the twenty-first century, to achieve the most basic living conditions. The extreme poverty of the South, AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria are all offensive to human dignity. The South's struggle for survival is meaningful only if it finds some response in the North. This presupposes recognition of the equality of rights and of inequality of means to guarantee these rights.

In Africa, initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) have been devised to address and remedy a socio-economic situation that has led to the most atrocious effects. But we must recognize that NEPAD's viability also depends on the North's good will to contribute to finding an appropriate solution to the main problems of the African continent.

Our countries, on the other hand, place their hopes in the recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development recently held in Johannesburg. This world forum took into account the human being and all the dimensions of life and survival. In other words, we hope that, by the year 2015, we will actually see a reduction in poverty by half, so that we may address priorities other than hunger, disease and war, among others.

The time has come for our countries to save our peoples from the many agonies of war and from traumatic effects on our children and to put an end to the unprecedented losses suffered by our economies due to the exorbitant cost of weapons that harm our lives and those of our children. It is time to become aware of our heavy responsibility to ensure that future generations are not sacrificed to history.

The President took the Chair.

From another standpoint, war seeks only to prove one's force to another, and prove one's capacity to destroy. From that perspective, it can only be nefarious. This has led Comorians to banish any attempt to do anything that would lead us to confrontation. We reinforce our internal forces, which, together with our wisdom and the culture of the Comoros, lead us to forgive. We base this on our religion, Islam, which advocates tolerance, peace and love of neighbour.

Guided by these sacred principles, the people of Comoros, after four years of upheaval in its socio-political sphere, finally found itself, found reconciliation and decided to heal its old wounds. Thus, on the initiative of President Azali, the various parties of the Comoros came to an agreement of national reconciliation, with the support of the Organization of African Unity and the International Organization of la Francophonie.

Following this agreement and after establishing a Transitional Government of national unity, pluralistic, transparent and democratic presidential elections for

the Union of the Comoros and for the islands took place. The contest was run in a legitimate way and the winner was the outgoing President, Colonel Azali Assoumani. Following the elections, every island was given its own president, with full responsibility for self-management. Toward the end of this year, we will hold legislative elections intended to establish national institutions and to provide the country with a parliament. This next stage is also of crucial importance. In fact, with the establishment of the parliaments, we will be able to address and settle many outstanding issues not settled by the constitutions of the islands and the Constitution of the Union. These constitutions have often referred to organic laws, which must be enacted by the parliaments.

We must recognize that this silence, this absence of legislation, may have led to misunderstanding, but this has not interfered with the regular functioning of the administration. Furthermore, commissions have been established to review modalities that are to enable the progressive transfer of powers to the authorities of the autonomous islands subject to the provisions of the various constitutions. It is obvious that beginnings are often difficult. In these circumstances, this transfer, as well as the procedures for the distribution of State property, have sometimes met with disagreement from one quarter or another. This is understandable in a country that had formerly been managed under a different system.

This situation can be explained, in our view, by the absence of organic laws that would determine details of essential aspects currently subject to protest by various parties. We trust that with the establishment of the Parliament, these misunderstandings will be allayed and will yield to the harmony needed to manage the political life of the autonomous islands and of the Union.

I wish to convey the deep appreciation of the people and the Government of the Comoros to all the brotherly and friendly countries and all the regional and international institutions which have to date supported us in every respect. Their cooperation has been indispensable, and, together with the wisdom of the people of the Comoros, has enabled us to avoid the worst in a small country where we are all one family. We pay enthusiastic tribute to their actions. Equally, it is our wish that crises in other parts of the world will have a satisfactory conclusion. We appeal to all partners of the Comoros to continue supporting our country as it pursues its socio-economic development.

Without minimizing the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte, I wish to refer to that subject last of all. This is a matter of great concern to the people and the Government of my country. In fact, this is a matter of sovereignty, and thus of dignity and patriotic conscience, which we cannot abandon, because by doing so we would be abandoning our identity, our culture, our civilization, our history and our geography. In our quest for a solution to this problem, a single principle guides us and a single will moves us to resolve this painful dispute with respect for international law and in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, while at the same time preserving the benefits we enjoy within the framework of our relations with France. In that respect, speaking on behalf of the Government of the Union of the Comoros, I fervently appeal to France to ensure that a dialogue begins.

The strategy we advocate has the advantage of insuring that the Comorian Island of Mayotte will not remain in isolation, that it will be incorporated into a regional framework which will bring it closer to its sister islands as well as to its neighbours in the subregion. We therefore hope the same considerations will prevail on the French side so that together we can reach an agreement which will guarantee greater calm and better understanding within our long-standing relationship.

Whenever I address this question I recall the great Tunisian poet Abu al-Qasim al-Shabbi, who invites us not to despair and to rely on reason.

(*spoke in Arabic*):

> "If people ever want life
> Then time must respond,
> Night must dissipate and shackles
> Must be shattered."

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Choe Su Hon, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Choe Su Hon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Korean; English text furnished by the delegation)*: I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. It is our expectation that your able stewardship will enable

the work of this session to result in tangible progress. I also appreciate the efforts of Secretary-General Kofi Annan towards international peace and sustainable development.

I am going to contribute to the work of the General Assembly by presenting a perspective on the situation of the Korean peninsula, which remains a major concern in terms of world peace and security.

More than 50 years have passed since the division of Korea by outside forces. As the Korean people undergo immeasurable pain and misfortune due to the division of the country and the nation, the world realizes that, as long as the homogeneous Korean nation remains artificially divided, Korea will never be peaceful, nor will peace and security be possible there.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea made reunification the supreme national task from the first day of the division, and has since adhered to its stand with respect to achieving reunification independently, through dialogue and negotiation between the North and South of Korea.

The fatherly leader of our people, President Kim Il Sung, long ago set forth the principles and programmes for reunifying the country independently through peaceful national unity. He proposed achieving reunification by means of a federation system where different ideas and systems would continue to exist in the North and the South. He devoted all his efforts to national reunification up until the moment he died.

The respected General Kim Jong Il has defined three main charters for national reunification as: the three principles of national reunification; the 10-Point Programme for the Great Unity of the Whole Nation; and the proposal on founding the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo put forward by the fatherly leader. These provide a basis for the country's reunification.

It is thanks to the ideas of national independence and national unity of the respected General Kim Jong Il that the historic inter-Korean summit meeting took place in Pyongyang in June 2000 and that the North-South Joint Declaration was adopted; this served as a turning point in the efforts of the Korean people for the country's reunification. The 15 June 2000 North-South Joint Declaration is a declaration of national independence and peaceful reunification calling for opposing foreign interference and achieving reunification by the concerted efforts of the Korean nation. After the publication of the North-South Joint Declaration, the North and the South held talks and engaged in contacts in various fields, seeking ways and means to achieve reconciliation and unity. They discussed measures for cooperation, exchanges and relaxation of tension in Korea; thus the spirit of reunification on the Korean peninsula gained momentum.

However, the positive development of inter-Korean relations was frustrated by the interference of external forces, and the North-South Joint Declaration thus faced major obstacles.

It is fortunate indeed that inter-Korean relations have now been put back on track through the dialogue and contacts on implementing the Joint Declaration, held in recent months at the initiative of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The ministerial-level talks were resumed. Dialogue and contacts in other fields are under way, and a national reunification meeting of compatriots from the North, the South and overseas was held successfully on the occasion of the 15 August Korean restoration day.

The North and the South have jointly introduced an agenda item entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean Peninsula" at the current session of the General Assembly and have agreed to draw up and submit a draft resolution under that item.

Governments and peoples of many countries are supporting and welcoming the emerging détente on the Korean peninsula as well as the trend towards reconciliation and cooperation between the North and the South.

The history of division for more than 50 years is a serious lesson for all Korean people. If the reunification of the country is to be achieved, the North and the South should, above all, reject foreign interference, which is a main obstacle to reunification, and should join efforts on the basis of ideas of national independence and great national unity.

The modern history of Korea serves as a clear illustration of the high price paid and the great sacrifices made in succumbing to foreign intervention and relying on outside forces. The division of Korea was imposed by outside forces after the Second World War. It was neither the will nor a requirement of the Korean people. It is none other than those same foreign

forces that continue to shadow inter-Korean relations at every stage of their favourable development and that undermine the interests of the Korean nation. Recourse to foreign forces and complicit action with them against fellow countrymen are inevitably destined to lead to mistrust and confrontation in inter-Korean relations.

We are firmly convinced that we can resolve all problems in the interests of the Korean nation by transcending the differences in ideologies and systems existing between the North and the South, if the North and the South sit together in the spirit of national independence and the love of country and people.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will, in the future, make every effort to achieve independent reunification through a federation system that unites the strength of the entire Korean nation in the spirit of the North-South Joint Declaration.

In order to ensure peace and security on the Korean peninsula and realize reunification, the hostile policy of the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be terminated.

The United States defines the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as its "prime enemy" that poses a "threat" to it. It also designates us as the "axis of evil" and "target of a pre-emptive nuclear strike" on the pretext of "anti-terrorism," thus further aggravating the situation.

It is quite unreasonable that the United States antagonizes and threatens us with the use of force for the sole reason that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea firmly adheres to an independent policy and holds different values and ideas. This also contravenes the United Nations Charter and the norms of international relations. It is entirely as a result of the consistent peace-loving policy and efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that peace is maintained on the Korean peninsula.

Our position on relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States is ever principled and consistent. If the United States respects our system and sovereignty and takes an attitude of goodwill towards us, we can develop relations with the United States based on the principles of equality and mutual benefit. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea considers that it is most reasonable to solve pending issues between itself and the United States through dialogue and negotiations.

We had therefore already agreed to the United States suggestion that it send a special envoy with a view to presenting its position on the resumption of dialogue. Furthermore, during the conversation between our Foreign Minister and United States Secretary of State at the 9th meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum in July, we again welcomed the United States willingness to send its special envoy to Pyongyang.

The point is that trustful dialogue can be resumed only when the United States refrains from its hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and maintains a position of equality with us.

If the United States intends to have a substantial dialogue with us on the principle of sovereign equality, we will respond accordingly. This will facilitate confidence-building between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States and open up the prospect for hammering out a fair solution to the pending issues.

The United Nations should also do its due part for the peace and security of Korea. In this regard, I wish to remind you that immeasurable suffering and misfortune were imposed on the Korean peninsula under the name and flag of the United Nations. It is highly expected that the United Nations will soon seek to redress the abnormal circumstances under which its name has been misused for over 50 years.

We take pride in contributing positively to peace and security on the Korean peninsula, the Northeast Asian region and the world in general, even under the constant threats and confrontations that have persisted for more than 50 years.

Our great leader, General Kim Jong Il, leads our people wisely with his army-based policies aimed at defending the country, building a powerful nation and providing for a favourable environment for peace and reunification in Korea, thanks to his energetic and untiring external activities.

The respected General Kim Jong Il had a meeting with President Putin in the Far East region of the Russian Federation in August this year, and is holding talks with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan in Pyongyang today, 17 September. These contacts serve as turning points in the development of relations

between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Russia, the normalization of relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan, and also serve as a great contribution to world peace, security and the creation of a new and just world structure.

Our people will, in the future, firmly defend our socialist system and achieve peace and the reunification of the Korean peninsula under the outstanding army-based leadership of the respected General Kim Jong Il, thus fulfilling our mission for peace and security in the world.

Radical changes have taken place in the international arena since the "11 September incident." Attempts to expand the "war against terrorism" without justifiable reasons continue and the policy of power supremacy has emerged, openly advocating a theory of pre-emptive nuclear attack beyond the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, thus further challenging world peace and security.

Hunger, poverty and external debts have become worse, while the inequality in international economic and trade relations and the gap between the rich and the poor have widened further. All these actions and events in international relations entirely contravene the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

My delegation considers that the most pressing task before United Nations Members today is to respect and uphold the spirit enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Above all, the sovereignty and equality of all countries should be respected. The use of force, the application of coercive measures and, in particular, unilateral acts should not be allowed in international relations.

To this end, the power of the United Nations General Assembly should be decisively enhanced. The General Assembly should be empowered to review the issues concerning international peace and security and to approve major decisions of the Security Council in this regard. At present, the General Assembly is not even properly carrying out its intrinsic power as stipulated in the United Nations Charter.

International issues, such as conflict resolution, disarmament, terrorism and sustainable development, should be discussed and decided with the full participation of all United Nations Members, in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

It is also important that democracy and impartiality be ensured in all United Nations activities and the work of reforming the Security Council, in particular, is undertaken to make it true to its main purpose. The Security Council should be reformed in such a way as to properly reflect present reality, where almost all countries have become United Nations Members, and fully ensure impartiality and democracy.

In order to achieve the purposes of the United Nations, fair international economic and trade relations should be established and the right to development respected. Unless the present unfair international economic system is redressed, poverty cannot be eliminated, nor can the gap between the rich and the poor be removed, nor sustainable development for all be ensured.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will, as ever, make all efforts to uphold and achieve the purposes and principles of the United Nations on the basis of the ideas of independence, peace and friendship.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3237 XXIX of 22 November 1974, 43/177 of 15 December 1988, and 52/250 of 7 July 1998, I now give the floor to the chairman of the observer delegation of Palestine, His Excellency Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi.

Mr. Kaddoumi (Palestine) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. We are confident that you will conduct the proceedings of this session with great competence, thanks to your outstanding skills and qualities.

I should like to pay tribute also to your predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, who presided ably over the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Let me also express my deep appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General to harmonize international relations and to ensure respect for the principles of the Charter with a view to strengthening international peace and security.

I wish also to welcome Switzerland and Timor-Leste to the United Nations.

We have agreed to the American political initiative that was put forward in 1991. At the Madrid Conference, several agreements were entered into by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), representing the Palestinian people, and Israel. The aim of those agreements was the commencement of negotiations between the two parties with a view to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). They also called on Israel to withdraw from the Arab territories occupied since 1967.

A deadline of five years was set for those negotiations. The clock began to run after the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 in Washington, under the auspices of the previous United States President — President Clinton.

However, successive Israeli Governments have refused to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories and have continued to deploy Israeli forces there. This intransigence on the part of Israel highlights its goal: the continued occupation of Palestinian territories.

During the course of those negotiations, new settlements were built, 187 altogether, inhabited by some 370,000 settlers, most of them armed. Recently, Israel began building a wall along the line of the 1967 truce. Israel is continuing its cruel and barbaric acts and carrying out its scorched-earth policy, with a view to depriving the Palestinian people of their income and means of subsistence. During the past two years of conflict, agricultural production has dropped by 80 per cent and industrial production by 60 per cent. Unemployment has reached 65 per cent, and 63 per cent of the population is living in poverty.

Israel has destroyed public institutions, police stations, ports and airports. More than 1,350 houses have been torn down, and more than 3,000 businesses and industrial concerns in the occupied territories and in Gaza have been demolished, an area of 5,800 square kilometres.

The taxes that Israel collects, about $850 million, which should have been paid to the Palestinian Authority, have been kept by the Israelis. A total of 90,000 olive trees, out of 300,000, have been uprooted, and the Palestinian infrastructure has been demolished. The occupied territories were divided into 227 separate cantons. Trade was halted, measures were taken to curtail the freedom of movement of people and of goods, and borders with Arab countries were closed. In addition, the Israeli authorities have placed President Arafat under house arrest.

These arbitrary measures have prompted the Palestinian people to pursue their heroic resistance, in the face of Israel's various lethal weapons, which are used to enforce the separation between the cantons. In Bethlehem, in Gaza and in other cities, residential areas have been bombed. Moreover, many Palestinians have been thrown into jail.

The fact-finding team set up by the Security Council was prevented from going into the field to witness firsthand the suffering of the Palestinian people at the hands of the Nazi Israeli occupation.

The United States is a great Power and bears an important responsibility vis-à-vis the maintenance of international peace and security and the prevention of regional conflict. Moreover, the United States has committed itself to working with the former Soviet Union, through the United Nations, to resolve conflicts by peaceful means and to eliminate their arsenals of weapons of mass destruction.

This is a very important approach that enables the United Nations to enhance fruitful international cooperation among States. Should that approach be abandoned, the United Nations will fail to develop international cooperation and to maintain international peace and security. The use of force in the context of intra-State relations to resolve problems does not help us in any way to uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations. On the contrary; it only gives rise to fear and doubt among the States Members of the United Nations, especially developing countries, which have always turned to the Organization to protect them.

The peoples of the world are looking to the United States in the hope that that major Power will play a positive and neutral role in international relations and in the hope that it will always be a source of technological and economic assistance.

It goes without saying that the commitment of the United States to the strict implementation of United Nations resolutions — in particular those of the Security Council — without the use of a double standard strengthens our trust in the United Nations and reinforces its credibility as a forum for the resolution of international problems.

Thus we are justified in asking ourselves whether these humanitarian and political responsibilities are incumbent on the United States in this era of globalization. We might ask ourselves why the United States is threatening to use force against Iraq, when sanctions have been imposed on that country for more than 10 years.

Why does the United States not speak of the elimination of the weapons of mass destruction possessed by Israel, which threaten the Arab States, as was noted previously? Israel could destroy the Egyptian high dam, even though a peace agreement was signed between Israel and Egypt more than 24 years ago. Mr. Hans Blix has stated that he had no evidence that Iraq had any weapons of mass destruction.

When the political negotiations began, the Arab countries took a neutral position. Israeli Prime Ministers Rabin and Peres visited certain Arab States and an attempt was made to normalize Israeli-Arab relations. When Yitzhak Rabin was killed in 1995 and authority was handed over to Mr. Netanyahu, progress towards peace was impeded. The Arab countries halted the process of normalizing relations with Israel. Nevertheless, at the 1996 Arab Summit they said that peace was an Arab strategy that would not be abandoned. Despite five years of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, however, expectations were not fulfilled.

Great sacrifices were made on our part. During the Camp David summit, an aide to President Clinton denied that Barak wanted to give the Palestinians a large part of Palestinian territory. Israel was to keep 10 per cent of the territory along the Jordanian border, with three early-warning systems in the West Bank and the establishment of a mutilated Palestinian State with no sovereignty.

The events of 11 September 2001 led to a humanitarian catastrophe that shook the conscience of the world. All countries of the world, including Arab and Muslim countries, stood in solidarity with the American people and expressed their intention to combat terrorism in all its forms. We were surprised, however, that the United States Administration refused to acknowledge that the Sharon Government was perpetrating acts of State terrorism. The Arabs put forward a political initiative at the Arab Summit in March, in the hope that they would be able to make an effective contribution to ending the Arab-Israeli conflict with a view to ratifying a peace agreement with Israel. This Arab initiative, which provided for a withdrawal by Israel from lands occupied since 1967 and the establishment of a Palestinian State with Al-Quds as its capital, was endorsed and welcomed by the United States and the European States. It is not enough, however, to merely welcome the initiative. We believe that implementing it would make a political settlement possible. Expressions of compassion and sympathy are welcome but they must be supported by concrete actions if a settlement is to be achieved. The Arab initiative includes all the essential principles necessary for a settlement, in accordance with the provisions of the Madrid Agreement and the principle of land for peace.

Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) went even further in supporting the establishment of a Palestinian State that would be recognized by Israel. This was accompanied by an American proposal. If Israel rejects this comprehensive and fair proposal, how much longer can it expect to continue in this climate of animosity towards Arabs and constant threats to their security? How long can Israel continue to occupy Arab territory and prevent Palestinian refugees from returning home? The question of Palestine cannot be separated from the situation of the Arab States, given all that the issue represents for them and for their future.

Israel must end the acts of aggression that it continues to perpetrate against Palestinians and their towns. The Israeli army is continuing to assassinate civilians and police and security officers. Sharon has been described as a man of peace, and it has been said that Israel has a right to self-defence, even as it continues to occupy Arab territories and commit massacres. The situation on the ground defies the imagination; it is very difficult to find a way to justify the American policy. If the threat of terrorism is allowed to rule our lives, the world will become a battlefield.

In conclusion, we and the other Arab countries welcomed the American statement on the establishment of a Palestinian State. We reaffirm, however, that the borders of that State should be based on the demarcation line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with Council resolutions. Its sovereignty must be assured, and Israeli forces must be withdrawn from all the territory. We cannot agree to any temporary borders.

We want a lasting settlement in keeping with the Arab initiative put forward by Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia — an initiative that is in keeping with relevant Security Council resolutions and with the principles of the peace process.

We appreciate the role that the Quartet is playing in the peace process. No party should call upon the Palestinians alone to meet their demands. The Israeli forces must be called upon to revise their strategy and the Israeli side must end its assassinations and attacks against citizens and refrain from using collective economic sanctions, occupation and terrorism as a tool.

Israel must halt its ongoing assault, lift the siege that has been imposed upon the Palestinian people and withdraw completely from the occupied territories so that the Palestinian Authority can implement the promised reforms and hold elections in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as in Al-Quds, under international auspices. There should be an international presence to guarantee the protection of the Palestinian people. This is a matter of urgency; the siege that is impeding the daily life of our citizens must be lifted.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate for this meeting.

One delegation has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): I should like to take up two statements made in the general debate this morning. First, I would like to respond briefly to the remarks about Gibraltar made today by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain. The long-standing position of the British Government on this matter is well known. We will continue to stand by the commitment to the people of Gibraltar set out in the preamble to the 1969 Constitution of Gibraltar, which enshrines the principle of consent of the people of Gibraltar to any change in sovereignty. The British Government shares Spain's view that issues relating to Gibraltar can be resolved only through dialogue, such as that which we resumed last year with Spain. Our aim remains to build a better future for the people of Gibraltar.

Secondly, with respect to the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina, the British Government welcomes the resolve of the Argentine Government to engage in positive bilateral exchanges with the United Kingdom concerning practical cooperation in the South Atlantic. My Government shares this resolve. We believe that such exchanges contribute further to the mutual understanding embodied in the 1999 Anglo-Argentine Joint Statement. Implementation of this Statement, which covers a range of issues concerning the South Atlantic, including air access, fisheries conservation and other confidence-building measures, shows that the United Kingdom and Argentina can manage our differences whilst developing cooperation on matters of common interest. We have continued to make steady progress in the past year.

However, we wish to recall that there is nothing in the 1999 Joint Statement that compromises the position of the United Kingdom in relation to its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. The British Government has no doubt about its sovereignty over these territories and their surrounding maritime areas.

The elected representatives of the Islands once again expressed their own views clearly when they visited the United Nations for this year's debate in the United Nations Committee of 24 on 19 June. They asked the Committee to recognize that they, like any other people, were entitled to exercise the right of self-determination. They reiterated that the people of the Falkland Islands did not wish for any change in the status of the Islands. We fully support the right of self-determination, as set out in paragraph 2 of Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations and paragraph 4 of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and we remain committed to the right of the people of the Falkland Islands to determine their own future. There will be no change in the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless the islanders wish it.

This year, we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the 1982 South Atlantic conflict and we are confident that our relations with Argentina will continue to develop in the spirit of reconciliation which marks this occasion. We believe that cooperation with Argentina on matters of mutual interest will enable us to manage our differences, whilst assisting in the development of confidence and trust in the South Atlantic.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Argentine Republic listened attentively to the statement just made by the representative of the United Kingdom and wishes to affirm the concepts expressed by our Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship in the statement he made this morning in the course of the general debate.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.